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On the CIA

Regarding the controversy over CIA support of the National Student Association and your editorial (Feb. 15), I must say that I am one of those who is neither "disgusted, dismayed or distressed" by what has been revealed. If anything distresses me it is the fact that the whole affair has been revealed.

The attitude which is displayed by your newspaper and others (including apparently some members of Congress) towards the CIA is really a curious one. I feel that it is necessary to remind you that the CIA is on our side, that the Director of the CIA has been appointed by the President, who in turn has been elected by the people, and that the CIA is watched over by a committee of Congress, whose members have also been elected by the people. Reading some of the comments I might have gained the impression that the CIA was appointed and directly financed by the Kremlin.

Should the American people, through their elected representatives decide that we do not need a CIA, then there will be no CIA. Until such time I would suggest that you let the agency gather information wherever it can. The American students who went abroad, after all, were Americans and they did nothing but help their country.

People who work for the CIA are civil servants like the people working for any other agency of the Federal Government. Contrary to the impression which you try to create, they are not out to destroy the United States. As for your continually repeated demand that there should be no secrecy would you suggest that we open the meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to newspaper and television reporters and naturally invite also representatives of the North Vietnamese news agency?

GEORGE K. SCHUELLER.  
Silver Spring.

What is so shocking about our Nation's intelligence agency, or any espionage agency for that matter, engaging in undercover operations? If CIA officials publically announced everything they did or operated above board in all their transactions, they should be fired as incompetent.

In an age of ideological warfare it is important to compete in world dialogue. This may be difficult in an open society. The battle for allegiance of men's minds must be adequately faced by the American people and its government.

The controversy can, however, spur Congress to approve some Government-supported instrument to promote the Nation's interest and share our ideological heritage with others in the world area.

CHARLES DEMERE.  
Washington.

In one of your letters (Feb. 19), a writer states in error that the CIA, the bulwark of this Nation (what a romance), to function properly and protect the U.S. from being infiltrated by subversives, has to rely on help wherever it safely can.

Many well-intentioned, patriotic Americans who are in the ranks of the literate and articulate, really have a very weak conception, if any, of the defined duties of our various agencies.

An act of Congress has defined the scope of the CIA's activities at the time it was set up to take over the Office

of Strategic Services. The sphere of its function and influence lies outside of our 50 States and insular possessions.

The protection of this country from infiltration by subversives is, according to law, supposed to be accomplished by both the Department of Justice (FBI) and the Bureau of Immigration with adequate day-to-day liaison and contact with the CIA when fruitful in given situations. Moreover, protection from subversion coming from within the United States is not the affair of the CIA but is entirely the province of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

All of these agencies are, or should be, properly coordinated through the Office of the President alone. I would add that no single agency should be classed as a bulwark.

WALTER J. SHANK.  
Washington.  
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"The thing which had great effect upon me was the family atmosphere and kindness — these were a cure to me from being away from my country ... What a wonderful spirit

This was written by a visitor from Egypt who had been entertained by a Washington family at Thanksgiving, and is quoted in the "Doorway to the U.S.A." booklet sent us by the Meridian House Foundation, because we also volunteered to share our lives with visitors from other lands.

With the headlines, "Business Leaders Are Tied to CIA's Operations"; "CIA Used NSA Staff For Spying"; "Newspaper Guild's World Program Operated on CIA Funds Since 1960"; all on the front page of the Feb. 18 Washington Post, I wonder how many other of the hundreds of "host" families in the area are now suspected by the foreign friends they made, of having been agents for the CIA?

Just how does one explain one's sincerity not only to the friends, but to our children who found the personal introduction to other cultures such a rewarding one, and who now have reason to question our Government's motives?

HELEN GARDNER.  
Bethesda.

I read your paper every day to get current events for school. Sometimes I don't understand everything and sometimes you just get me mixed up. I am only 13 years old and I don't presume to know as much as you do so please explain to me what did CIA do wrong.

When I read your headlines I feel like they did something terrible and then I read the stories and you explain all around it but you still don't say exactly what they did so bad only that it was real awful.

The President gives CIA a bunch of money to go out and spy, and save our country. CIA gets college kids and pays them money to be spies in foreign countries. Your paper says this is terrible. The only thing I see terrible is that somebody has to be paid to help their country, and that somebody tells the newspapers about it.

There were a lot of good Americans in history and I am sure that there are a lot of good Americans today. What I don't understand is why so many newspapers and TV programs make them out to be bad.

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